

County budget trimmed

More cuts expected today in effort to avoid another deficit

By AARON ALDRIDGE
Staff Writer

Newport In the shadow of a \$2.2 million deficit from the last fiscal year, Sullivan County commissioners met Wednesday night to further reduce the current year's budget, hopefully to prevent the same thing from happening this year.

"We're looking at some projected revenue shortfalls," Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said. "We're looking to offset those shortfalls by reducing the budget."

After meeting with department heads for more than two hours, the commissioners were able to cut \$583,174 from the 2007-2008 budget of \$27.3 million. The commissioners will tackle the nursing

home budget during a meeting this afternoon.

"Stay tuned. The health care portion is coming along," commissioner Jeff Barrette said.

At the beginning of the meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to place the deficit from last year on the 2008-2009 budget.

"Basically, it's almost as if it's a beginning balance," Barrette said.

See **BUDGET** - Page A10

BUDGET FROM PAGE A1

negative beginning balance."

There was no indication from the commissioners or Gil de Rubio what cuts might be made at the nursing home or by how much, but several cuts made during Wednesday's meeting will have an impact at the facility.

The capital account budget was reduced by \$312,000, effectively eliminating a new air-conditioning system at the nursing home and reducing the extent of landscaping improvements.

In addition, \$125,000 was cut from the facilities and operations budget.

One other major cut was \$105,000 from the Department

of Corrections budget which equates to a 4 percent cut in operating expenses.

No staffing positions were cut from the almost 300 people employed by the county and all employees will maintain their current salary levels and keep their current benefits.

Almost every department within the county had its budget cut.

Some cuts were very small, but each department head came to the meeting prepared to make some sacrifices.

"Essentially, what we're trying to do here is change our budget," Barrette said.

Other reductions made to

the budget were \$2,070 from the county manager's office, \$1,150 from the payroll office, \$300 from the conservation district, \$5,000 from the county attorney's office, \$400 from the victim witness budget, \$15,344 from the sheriff's department, \$2,310 from the delegation budget, \$12,350 from the register of deeds and \$2,850 from the commissioner's office.

The commissioners will meet today at 4 p.m. in Newport to continue discussing further budget cuts.

Aaron Aldridge can be reached at (800) 545-0347 ext. 139, or by e-mail at aaldridge@eagletimes.com.